

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 03955 202033Z

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

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PA-04 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20

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R 201930Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3391

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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1. SUMMARY: THE 30TH JLP CONFERENCE RESOLVED SOME ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS BUT THE QUESTION OF EFFECTIVE PARTY LEADERSHIP REMAINS. PETER RICKARD'S STAR BEGINS TO RISE. SEAGA DID NOT ATTEND. END SUMMARY

2. PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT, LONG RANGE RESULT OF THE NOVEMBER 17-18 30TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE JAMAICA LABOR PARTY (JLP) WAS THE DECISION, UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED, TO REORGANIZE THE LEADERSHIP. FROM THE 31ST PARTY CONFERENCE THE PRESENT LEADER OF THE PARTY, SIR ALEXANDER BUSTAMANTE, WILL RECEIVE THE TITLE "THE CHIEF" AND THE PRESENT DE FACTO LEADER, FORMER PRIME MINISTER HUGH SHEARER, WILL ASSUME THE TITLE OF LEADER AND WILL BE SERVED BY A FIRST DEPUTY LEADER AND THREE DEPUTY LEADERS OF EQUAL STATUS. THIS MOVE WILL STRAIGHTEN LINES OF AUTHORITY AND REMOVE THE AILING BUSTAMANTE FROM ACTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY. IN THE MEANTIME, THE ELEVATION OF EILTON HILL TO THE POST OF SECOND DEPUTY LEADER AND OF THE YOUNG AND VIGOROUS LAWYER, SENATOR PETER RICKARDS, TO THAT OF THIRD DEPUTY LEADER MAY SERVE TO

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PAGE 02 KINGST 03955 202033Z

STRENGTHEN THE LEADERSHIP AND INCREASE THE INFLUENCE OF YOUTH

IN THE PARTY'S COUNCILS - RICKARDS IS PRESIDENT OF THE RECENTLY-ESTABLISHED JLP YOUTH ARM, YOUNG JAMAICA, AND IS HELD IN VERY HIGH REGARD, BOTH WITHIN THE JLP AND WITHOUT.

3. AT THE PUBLIC SESSION ON NOVEMBER 18, LONG SPEECHES WERE DELIVERED BY THE PARTY LEADERSHIP IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WAS ROUNDLY CRITICIZED. SHEARER CONCLUDED HIS BARRAGE WITH A 90 MINUTE SPEECH AND LIST OF NINE "POINTS" WHICH INCLUDED, INTER ALIA, HIGHER INTEREST RATES FOR THE SAVINGS OF THE "SMALL MAN"; MAJORITY RIGHTS FOR 18-YEAR-OLDS; A NEW TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT ACT; RETURN OF SUBSIDIES ON BASIC FOODSTUFFS; REDUCTION OF PRICES ON GOODS ON WHICH THE WORLD PRICE HAD DECLINED; AND THE PROVISION OF FUNDS FOR CHRISTMAS WORK

4. SHEARER'S SPEECH ALSO REAFFIRMED THE PARTY'S DEDICATION TO THE FREE-ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, WITH THE CLEAR SUGGESTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS MOVING TOWARD SOCIALISM (A BUZZ-WORD) AND A ONE-PARTY STATE. HE SAID THAT BUSINESS AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED AND NOT HAMPERED BY GOVERNMENT POLICY

5. SHEARER MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CLARIFY ITS STAND ON THE PROVISION OF CHRISTMAS WORK FOR THE UNEMPLOYED - A TRADITIONAL DOLE FOR WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MAY NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT FUNDS THIS YEAR.

6. THE PRO-PNP DAILY NEWS HAS COMMENTED THAT THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES DECIDED AT THE JLP CONFERENCE MAY RESULT IN THE PNP BEING SEVERELY TESTED IN NEXT YEAR'S LOCAL ELECTIONS. IT CONDESCENDED TO ALLOW THAT SHEARER'S RE-ELECTION DEMONSTRATES "ON THE FACE OF IT" THAT HE IS BACK IN CONTROL OF THE RANK AND FILE

7. COMMENT: DESPITE THE DISPLAY OF UNITY AT THE PARTY CONFERENCE AND THE INFUSION OF NEW AND YOUNGER TALENT IN THE PERSON OF PETER RICKARDS, THE BASIC PROBLEMS OF LEADERSHIP HAVE NOT BEEN RESOLVED. THIS WAS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE ABSENCE OF THE PARTY'S SPOKESMAN ON FINANCE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KINGST 03955 202033Z

EDWARD SEAGA, WHO IS TRAVELLING ON UNESCO BUSINESS IN EUROPE. SEAGA MAY WELL HAVE MADE HIS TRAVEL PLANS IN ADVANCE OF THE SETTING OF A DATE FOR THE CONFERENCE, BUT HE HAS MADE KNOWN TO EMBASSY OFFICERS HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF THE PRESENT JLP LEADERSHIP. THE REVITALIZATION OF THE JLP WILL PROBABLY DEPEND TO A VERY GREAT EXTENT ON THE EFFORTS OF MEN LIKE RICKARDS AND SEVERAL OTHER YOUNG MPS. HEWITT

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